

BitterSweet

May, 1978

The Magazine of Maine's Hills & Lakes Region

75¢

Vol. 1 No. 7



**Mollyockett: Last of the Pequaketts
Oxford County's Food Cooperatives
Steaming Saunas: Local Finnish Legacy**

May '78

Dear Peter,

I seen that Guy Crockett you were telling me about on T.V. He's forgot more about gardening than you'll ever know, but your advice about getting his book was real good. Got to come down and see if the new barn is still standing.

Bert

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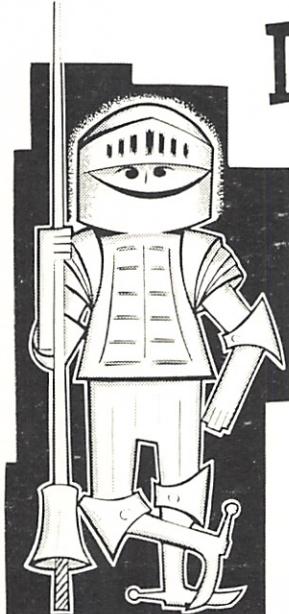
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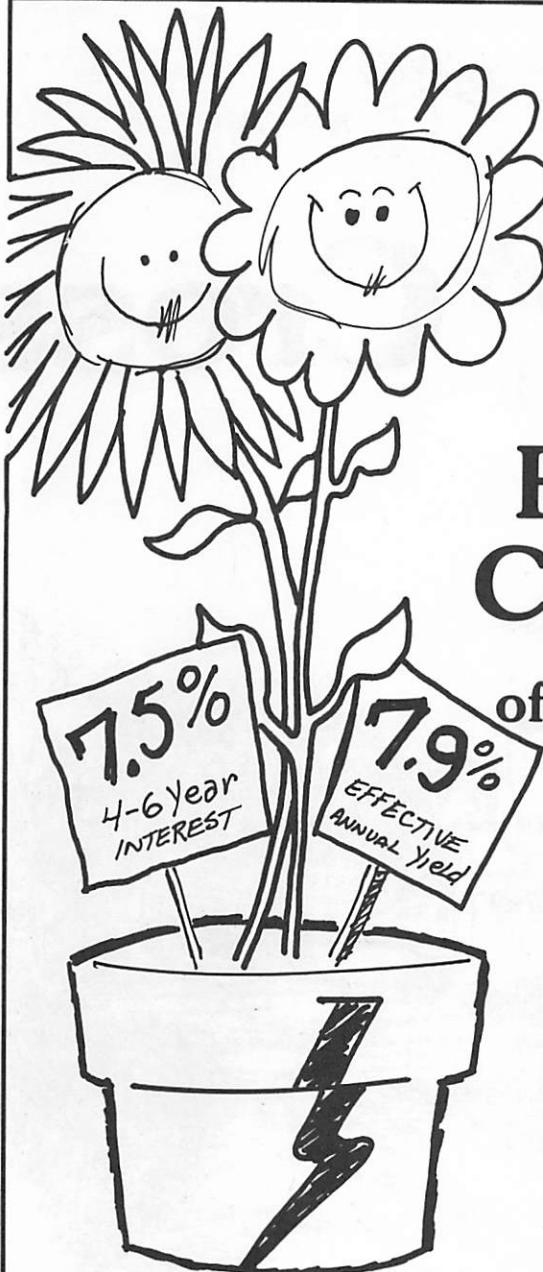
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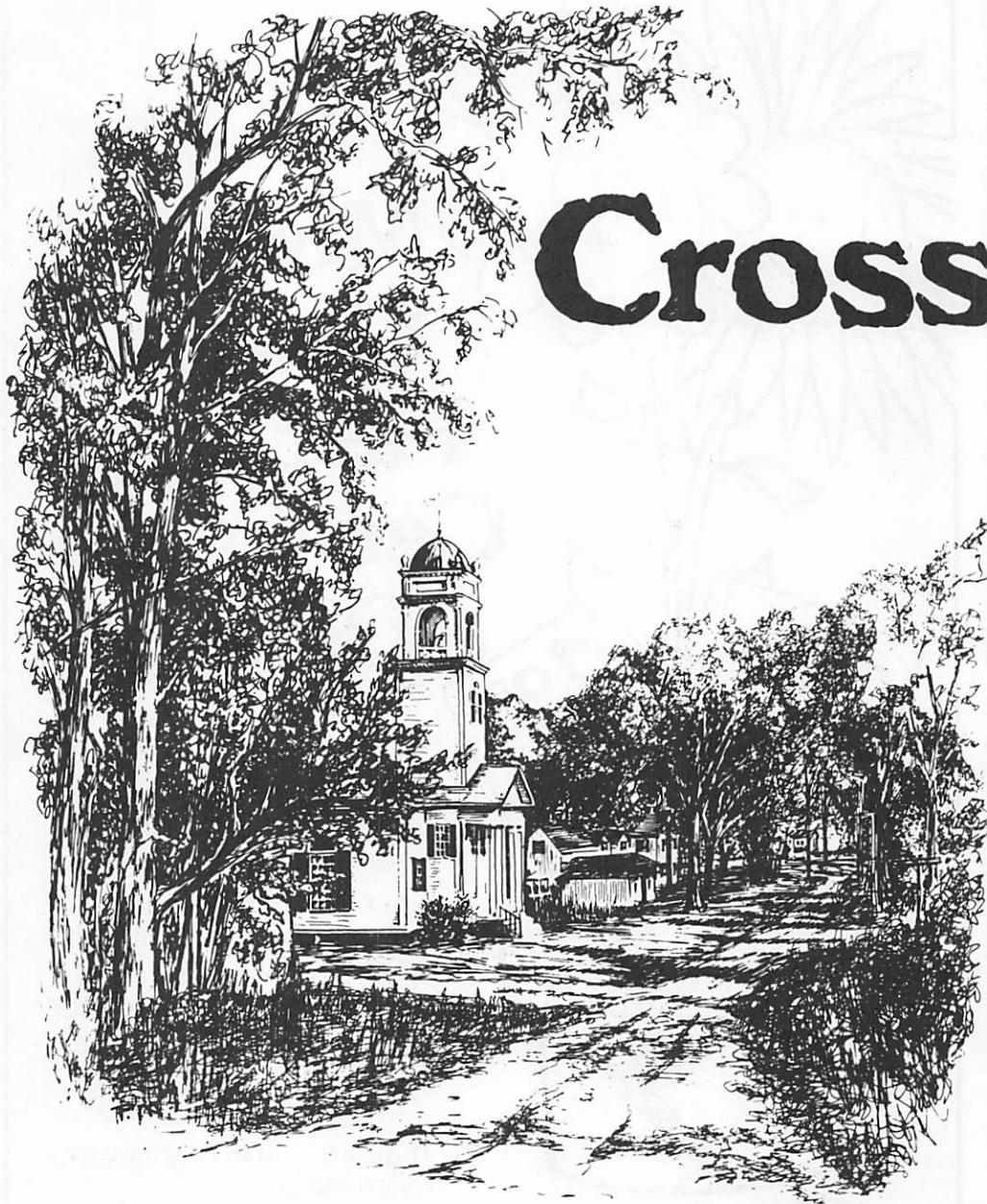
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roads

Mollyockett: Last of the

| | |
|---|----|
| Pequaketts by Jane Perham Stevens | 6 |
| Steaming Saunas: A Local Finnish | |
| Legacy by Cathy Flynn | 10 |
| Saunassa Viha Vilenee | |
| by Pat White Gorrie | 11 |
| Oxford County's Food | |
| Co-operatives by Ken Morse | 14 |
| A Maine Fishing Story | |
| by J. Featherstone Privy | 18 |
| The Old Hotel by Margery Eliscu | 22 |

Poetry

| | |
|---|----|
| Rising Sun by Winsow Durgin | 16 |
| For Want Of A Nail | |
| by Otta Louise Chase | 17 |
| Caterpillar by Winslow Durgin | 47 |
| Rock Wall by Janice Bigelow | 49 |
| BitterSweet Notes | 20 |
| Farther Out by C. C. Matolcsy | 26 |
| Can You Place It? | 28 |
| Medicine For The Hills | |
| by Dr. Michael Lacombe | 30 |
| Goings On | 32 |
| Ayah | 34 |
| You Don't Say | 35 |
| Homemade (Rhubarb Time) | |
| by Lucretia Douglas | 36 |
| Folk Tales (Estelle Pottle Stone) | |
| by Pat White Gorrie | 38 |
| Peddler Page | 40 |
| Recollections (Keeping the Roads | |
| Open in Winter) by Fred Colby | 42 |

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This issue of **BitterSweet** marks the magazine's seven month anniversary — the start of its second half year. It's an appropriate time to take stock.

Perhaps the most gratifying outcome of our brief publishing existence to date has been the startling amount of local material which has flooded our mails — articles and poetry, photographs and fiction. The material has come not only from freelance writers like Cathy Flynn of Buckfield and Pat White Gorrie of Oxford, who have become regular contributors, but also from a wide variety of self-professed amateurs, ranging from retired farmers to town selectmen, nursing home residents to housewives.

In this issue, for instance, while Flynn and Gorrie combine talents to capture the feel and appeal of the Finnish sauna (page 10), Inez Farrington of the Ledgeview Nursing Home in South Paris and Lucretia Douglas of West Baldwin (who describes herself as "a farm wife and great-grandmother, having raised cattle, poultry, pigs and children for forty years...") team up in **BitterSweet Notes** (page 20).

Fred Colby of South Paris recalls the trials of keeping the winter roads clear during the

early part of this century (page 47). Jane Perham Stevens spins a fascinating tale of the Indian Princess Mollyockett on page 6. The history of Oxford County's Food Cooperatives is traced by one of the local coop's prime movers, Ken Morse of Waterford, on page 14.

Margery Eliscu, a well-known columnist with the Norway-based James Newspapers, changes hats with her piece "The Old Hotel," which appears on page 22. She shares this month's fiction docket with outdoorsman and fishing enthusiast J. Featherstone Privy (page 18).

Although we've admittedly been pleased with the quantity and quality of local contributions, we'd like to hear more — particularly from those of you who are more readers than writers. Let us know what you like about the magazine and what you don't like; what you'd like to see added and what you'd like to see eliminated.

BitterSweet is growing. We want to make sure it blossoms into something everyone can enjoy.

Sandy Wilhelm

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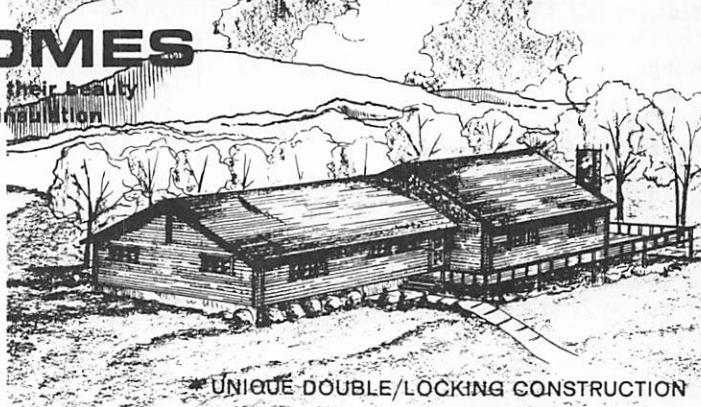


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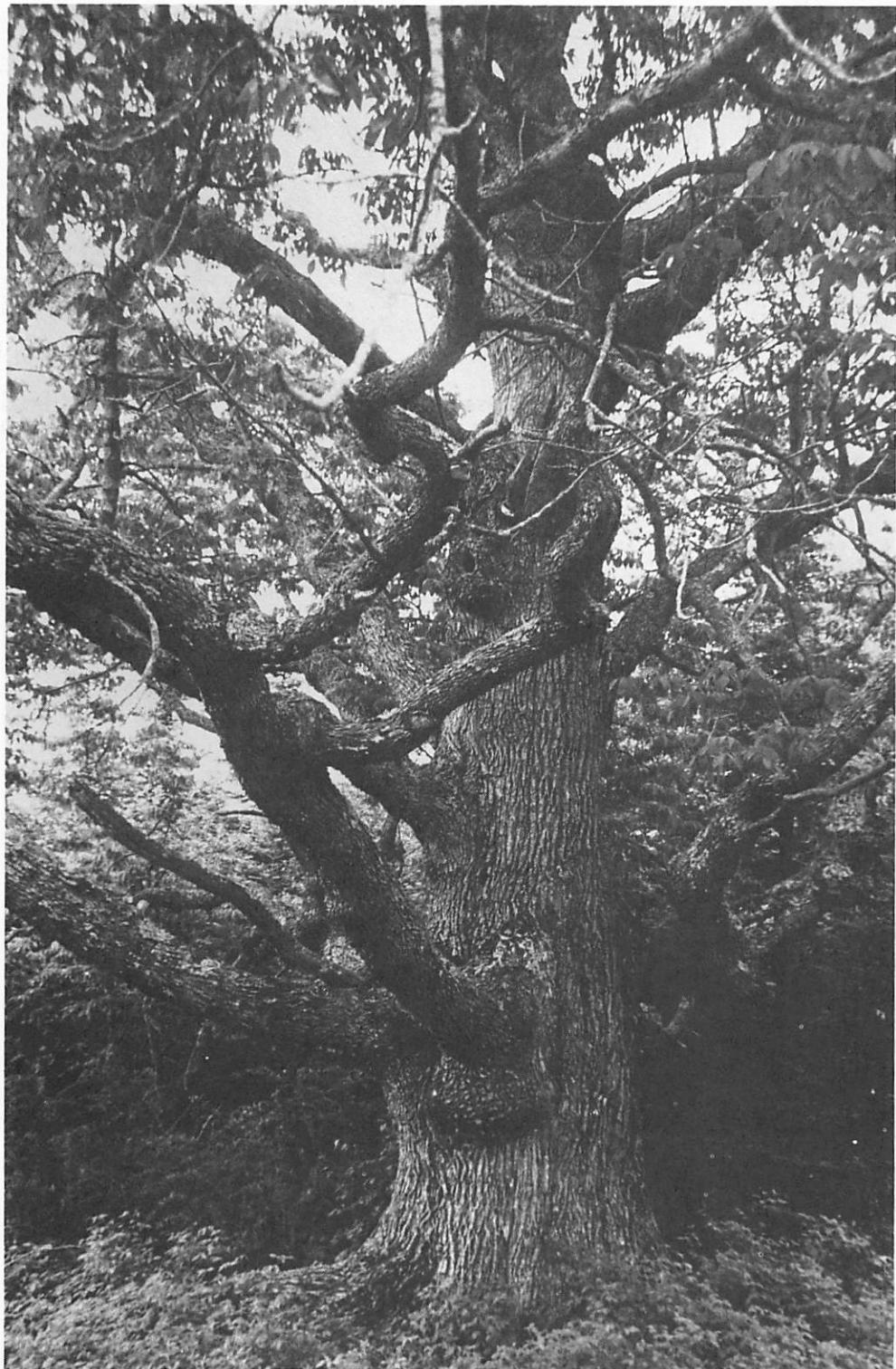
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Mollyockett — Last of the Pequaketts

by Jane Perham Stevens

Clever, capable, and possessed of great physical and emotional strength, the Indian Princess Mollyockett was a good and loyal friend to the area's early settlers.



No area is complete without its folklore, and Mollyockett has served Oxford County well. Young and old alike are fascinated by tales of this Indian who was one of the region's first settlers.

Few actual facts are known about Mollyockett so the many stories told about her are basically based on folklore. This undoubtedly makes her character more intriguing. We all love a legend.

Many believe Mollyockett was born at Saco, although the place, as well as the date of her birth, is uncertain. She was well known to area settlers shortly after the year 1700. Frequently referred to as a Saint Francis Indian, Mollyockett is thought to have been the daughter of Paugus, who was a Pequakett. Proudly, she described the great deeds of her father and grandfather whom she claimed were tribal chieftains.

No records proved Mollyockett to have been an original proprietor of Bethel as she always claimed, but she certainly was one of the town's first inhabitants. Her extensive travels radiated about this settlement when it was still known as Sudbury, Canada. During her lifetime, Bethel was home to Mollyockett.

Unlike the majority of Indians living in the area, Mollyockett was friendly and she enjoyed a sociable existence. Her Indian garb was accented by a unique pointed cap, making her an easily recognizable figure. Though her favorite traveling route ran from Andover to Paris Hill, she was well known in Rumford Falls, Canton, Minot, Poland, North Conway, Fryeburg and Baldwin.

Mollyockett welcomed the opportunity to chat with those she met along the way. These chance encounters undoubtedly added to the vast number of tales in her repertoire. They may also have provided her with the basis for the advice she so freely offered. One such offering solemnly admonished a child to remember through his life:

"Never marry a woman who doesn't love flowers nor trust a person who hates either music or children. When in bad company get out of it at once. As you pass through life's journey, your greatest troubles will be found to result from ignorance."

Mollyockett was kind and generous by nature. Like many Indians, she was familiar

with the medicinal values of herbs and plants growing in the woods. Eventually, she acted as a traveling doctor administering to the sick and supplying needed medicines. Mollyockett had great faith in the water she retrieved from a spring in Poland which later became the source for the famed Poland Spring Waters. Her services as a doctor were in great demand, but the most she would accept in payment was one penny. This modest fee was placed carefully in the leather pouch which hung 'round her neck.

An important portion of the legend of Mollyockett deals with her renowned healing powers. Once, while traveling in mid-winter, for instance, she was forced to seek shelter from a raging blizzard. Refuge was denied her at Snow's Falls and she was compelled to push onward. Fortunately, the Hamlin family at Paris Hill welcomed her as they would any guest. Mollyockett repaid her hosts by administering to the baby of the family, who was ill. Her treatment cured the baby, whom Mollyockett predicted would grow to become a great man. Her prophecy came true. The baby, Hannibal Hamlin, grew up to serve as Vice President of the United States under Abraham Lincoln. Thus, Mollyockett may have had a hand in shaping future political events in the country.

Understandably, Mollyockett was angry at the lack of hospitality shown her by the settlers of Snow's Falls. She struck back by placing a curse on this small settlement and upon the people living there. Whether through coincidence or not, the mill, the inn and most of the residences at Snow's Falls were eventually abandoned due to a lack of prosperity. (The restaurant now doing a healthy business at Snow's Falls must have appeased the spirit of Mollyockett!)

The woods held no secrets for the Indian Princess. She was regarded as a highly skilled hunter, well-acquainted with the habits of bear, deer, moose and the other wild animals. Mollyockett thoughtfully made frequent gifts of meat and game to the settlers, who greatly appreciated her generosity. Knowing one man's fondness for moose nose, Mollyockett often made a special point of supplying him with this delicacy. Still another settler was the recipient of enough duck down to fashion a fine featherbed.

Mollyockett was a good and loyal friend to the settlers in many ways. She once risked

her own life to save a Colonel Clark from the murderous Indian renegade Tomhegan. Clark hailed from Boston and traveled to this area to purchase furs from time to time. By accident, Mollyockett learned of the planned murder of Clark and barely reached the Colonel in time for his party to gain the safety of a nearby settlement.

An account of Mollyockett's personal life is sketchy, at best. Supposedly, she married Captain John Susup of Fryeburg and a daughter, Mol Susup, was born of that union. The relationship of Mollyockett and Susup was short-lived and she moved from Fryeburg back to Bethel where she made a home for herself and Mol. The girl attended school with the white children and quickly adapted herself to their language and ways.

An elderly Indian named Captain Swarson sought to marry Mol, but Mollyockett steadfastly refused to even discuss the matter. Mol Susup eventually married an Indian, but after he left her, she moved to Canada, where she remained.

Probably, Mollyockett's bond with the Indian Sabatis was more lasting. As with Susup, however, there is no proof of a legal marriage between the two. Mollyockett and Sabatis did have three children. Mollyockett maintained her home in Bethel, but Sabatis wasn't always with her. It seems likely that he may have continued to regard Fryeburg as his home.

Mollyockett and Sabatis quarreled bitterly, however, and their union was also eventually dissolved. She reportedly refused to live with him because of his great liking for "spirits."

Mollyockett may have been hasty in condemning Sabatis for his intemperance since she herself had a great fondness for rum. This came to light during one of her many visits to the Rickers' Poland Spring House. Mollyockett arrived complaining of a toothache and begging for some rum to warm her mouth. The rum easily — and quickly — disappeared down her throat and she eagerly reached for more, mumbling that it was awfully slippery stuff, but that she'd manage to keep it down if she had to try a hundred times!

Like many Indians, Mollyockett had a serious regard for religion. She was baptized Mary Agatha by the Reverend John Strickland in Andover, where she worshipped regularly. She considered herself a member of the Methodists, whom

she referred to as "dreful clever folks." Mollyockett frequently attended Methodist services in Bethel and often spoke at the meetings.

Despite her Protestant affiliation, Mollyockett made an annual pilgrimage to a Canadian mission where she confessed to a priest (an habitual occurrence among the Saint Francis Indians). Waivering between Protestantism and Catholicism caused problems for Mollyockett. Protestant friends sharply criticized her for picking blueberries on Sunday, for instance. She justified her practice of breaking the day of rest by explaining, "I felt so happy that the Great Spirit had put them there for me."

Mollyockett was once ignored when she joined a congregation in Poland for church services. No seat was offered, so she calmly took the matter into her own hands. Outside the church, she located a shingle bolt and returned with it to the church, placing the bolt directly in front of the altar. She then sat upon it and listened respectfully to the service.

Still another story of Mollyockett's religious acts is told. Upon the death of a husband (identity unknown), she requested that the priest say the necessary prayers to help the deceased through purgatory. After an advance payment of \$40, the priest prayed. Once he had assured Mollyockett that the husband was safely out of purgatory, she snatched the money back and tied it inside her blanket. The astounded priest threatened to return the man to purgatory, but Mollyockett wasn't swayed, politely explaining that her husband had always been most careful to mark any bad spot into which he fell with a stake so he wouldn't be caught there again. Since he was now safely out of purgatory, the problem would be behind him once and for all.

Mollyockett's knowledge of the area made her invaluable to the settlers. For three years she lived with Captain and Mrs. Ezekiel Merrill while they established their home at Andover. With her assistance, they planted crops, completed their house and conquered the hardships of establishing the homestead. Mollyockett also delivered Mrs. Merrill's first child. For three long years she and Mrs. Merrill were the only women living in Andover and they became close friends.

Because of Mollyockett's familiarity with the region, it is not surprising that some felt she knew where treasures of some sort

might be hidden in the area. There was great speculation that she might have hidden gold herself. Did she bury valuables somewhere in the wilderness? The question is frequently asked by those who have fallen prey to the legend of Mollyockett.

Tales of buried treasure may have enchanted Mollyockett, too. She maintained that the Indians, fleeing a smallpox epidemic in 1755, hid money somewhere near the town of Paris. She claimed that two traps had been hung in a tree to mark the spot where the gold was buried. Little attention was given the matter until some years later, when a man discovered a length of chain dangling from a tree. The chain obviously hung there for many years, as growth of the tree had partially hidden it from view. A search revealed no sign of any gold, but the incident served at least one purpose. Since the sighting of the chain, the area where it was found has been known as Trap Corner.

Eventually, Mollyockett was forced to abandon her nomadic existence and live more quietly. She supported herself by making baskets and moccasins. For a brief time, she lived with Colonel Clark and his family in Boston where she was welcomed in return for having saved the Colonel's life. Mollyockett was not content in the city, however, and she spent her final years in the area around Bethel that had always been home.

She lived for a while with the Merrills at Andover, but at the time of her death she was staying with a Bragg family in the same community. Yielding to Mollyockett's wishes, the family built a small camp near their house where she stayed.

Mollyockett appeared content with her surroundings and at peace with herself. When asked if she was ready to die, she replied, "Me guess so. Me hear people read in the Bible 'straight as the gate' and me try to walk very straight for a good many years."

One day she asked to be carried outside the camp. A few hours after the stars first twinkled in the sky that night, she died. It was August 2, 1816. Mollyockett had lived for more than a hundred years.

Reverend Strickland conducted the Christian burial service which laid Mollyockett to rest in the Andover Cemetery. In 1860, the ladies of the Andover Congregational Church purchased a marker for the grave, which still stands. The inscription on the stone reads, "Mollocket,

baptized Mary Agatha, died in the Christian Faith, August 2, 1816, last of the Pequakets."

In Oxford County today there are lasting reminders of Mollyockett. A mountain in South Woodstock, where she had a small camp, bears her name. A large boulder in Umbagog Lake is known as Molly's Rock. Mention of the name Mollyockett brings forth a flood of information about the deeds she supposedly performed.

During Mollyockett's lifetime she saw the land of the Indian become dominated by the white man. She adapted well to a lifestyle which combined the influences of both societies. She is remembered as having been clever, versatile, capable, intelligent, possessed of both great physical and emotional strength.

Thus ends the legend of Mollyockett. It contains fact and, hopefully, enough fancy to make the saga interesting. What of the gold supposedly buried at Trap Corner? Perhaps in another hundred years, the legend of Mollyockett will include the answer.



Many have written about Mollyockett. This poem by Addie Kendall Mason appeared in the *Bethel News* on September 4, 1895.

MOLL LOCKETT'S CURSE

'Tis a curious legend,
In my youth I heard it told,
How Moll Lockett cursed the white man
When he stole the Indian's gold.

'Mid the river's rolling waters,
Was an island green with trees;
Hemlocks tossed their dropping branches
With each fitfull passing breeze.

Through their tops the sighing zephyrs
Sang in soothing, slumberous tones
As the proud old monarchs nodded
To the river's dancing foam.

And beneath their spicy branches
Was the Indian's camping ground.
And they often came and camped there
As the seasons rolled around;

Steaming Saunas: A Local Finnish Legacy

by *Cathy Flynn*

**An old Finnish proverb teaches that two places are holy:
"church and sauna."**

(The Third In A Series)

The sauna, one of the most important elements of Finnish life, is nothing more than a small, unassuming structure, preferably situated near some water, built around a pile of stones and a simple platform. Bathers sit on benches lining the inside of the building, throw water on the heated stones to make steam, and thresh themselves with bunches of sweet-smelling birch leaves as the steam fills the room.

The Finnish bath house has remained unchanged for thousands of years. God was worshipped there, mothers gave birth there, meat was smoked and skis were tarred there. If you were sick, the sauna would cure you or nothing would. If you were well, the sauna would cleanse you.

It is in the sauna that Finns believe the stains of hard work are washed away and the body and soul are temporarily refreshed.

Often the Finns would begin their homesteading, not by building a cottage, but by constructing a sauna, where they would live and bathe until their house was built. The sauna was, and still is, the Finns' most characteristic and ancient institution.

A somewhat superstitious lot, the Finns believe it's bad luck to go into the sauna immediately after the embers have died down under the stones. The rocks are left to stand an hour or two. Early theologians argued that the Devil ought to be given the chance to gloat in the heat and then clear out of the bath. The Finn, however, can probably stand more heat than the Devil.

The principle of the bath centers on dry heat, with the steam being absorbed by the building's wooden walls. The average sauna temperature employed by most American women is about 175° F. Men can generally stand 200°. A tough Finn can tolerate scorching 248 degree temperatures.

The sauna fits into no identifiable category. It's essential purpose is to clean the body and mind. It isn't a sport, but athletes appreciate it. It isn't part of a religious devotion, but sauna bathers may pray or meditate while in the hotbox.

"It's relaxing and makes you feel squeaky clean," says Aino Niskanen of South Paris. "You don't need tranquilizers for sleep and you get all the kinks out of you."

Mrs. Niskanen and her husband, Sulo, bathe regularly with imported sauna soap (which smells like wood) in the 10-year-old log cabin sauna which they designed for their Paris Hill home.

"The sauna has been in our blood ever since we were children," she explains. "It makes your cares slip away."

In Finland, and now in many other parts of the western world, the sauna is a weekly ritual often shared with friends. The bath serves as a sort of shrine which is treated with respect and reverence. An old Finnish proverb teaches that two places are holy — "church and sauna." Today, Finns still consider it impolite to talk loudly while in the bath.

The word sauna (pronounced sow'na)

does not define the act of bathing itself, as is implied in the incorrect usage of the phrase, "to take a sauna." The sauna is the bathhouse, or the bathroom itself, whether it exists as part of a larger building, or as a separate structure. One takes not a sauna, but a *kyly* (pronounced *kul'pu*), meaning sauna bathing with hot vapors or *loyly* (low'lou).

Likewise it is not an oven or a stove which holds the heated stones, but a *kiuas* (kew'us), and the *vasta* (vah'sta) are the leafy branches of trees used to stimulate circulation and massage the body.

The Finns have inherited an extensive knowledge of saunas and how to behave in them. They have nine basic rules of thumb:

1. Plan the sauna bath in advance so that the stones will be the right temperature and you won't have to rush.
2. Work up a good sweat in the initial dry, hot heat.
3. Leave the hot room and cool off with cold water or in a nearby lake.

4. "Strike the stones with water" to create the *loyly*, or sauna vapors. Beat yourself with dampened leaves (repeat these steps as desired).
5. Wash with mild soap and water. Remember your companion. Offer to wash his or her back.
6. Return to the hot room to warm up.
7. Rinse in cold water or roll in fluffy snow. Then it's back to the hot room.
8. Cool off and dry. Wait until you have stopped sweating.
9. Dress.

In the sauna, often confused with the damp-aired Turkish bath, there is no moisture except for the bather's own perspiration. The two hallmarks of a Finnish sauna have always been high heat and low relative humidity.

According to sauna bathing experts, the most enjoyment can be obtained when *loyly* is dry during and after the bath. Thus, one should try to achieve a high heat and a relative humidity of 10 to 20 per cent. If it's

Next page...

SAUNASSA VIHA VIILENEE SAUNASSA SAMMU SAPPI

("Anger cools in a sauna, and bitterness fades away")

Hundreds of times I've driven past "The Village Sponge" in Oxford, and finally, on a bitter-cold, tail-end-of-winter day, I got up the nerve to go in. Chris and Jonathan, my eight- and ten-year-old sons, tagged along for moral support, clutching my hands and their bathing suits. They're not very big, but they made me feel braver.

After all, how did I know what fate awaited me? Somewhere in the back of my mind lurked the dim suspicion I was walking into a hybrid form of opium den and massage parlor. Would shady, unsavory characters be lurking and leering in the corners? Would I have to tiptoe naked and embarrassed into a wooden room full of staring, curious strangers? Would I throw up, faint or have a heart attack from the intense heat? Would I do likewise from the shock of the ice-cold hosing down?

Would I come out too weak and tired to

drive home? Would my door jam shut and trap me in there, cooking me to death before anybody realized my time was up? Would I get pneumonia upon walking from 200° heat into a snowfall? Would my reputation be tarnished forevermore if anyone in my tiny town of Otisfield saw me coming in or going out?

But, curiosity overcame trepidation. In we went.

Two gorgeous, fresh-faced young women, Martha and Gay Ryan, who looked like they were fresh off the ski slopes (which they were) greeted the boys and me, handed us our soap and towels (we declined the shampoo and razors), and gave us a quick run-down on what the procedure was. An elderly couple came out of one of the wooden doors and smiled at us as they dropped their wet towels into a bin. I was reassured by their relaxed, happy faces and the absence of

Page 13...

too dry, the air is uncomfortable to breathe, and it is difficult to swallow. Breathing through the mouth against the dampened birch leaves can relieve the discomfort.

Similarly, if the humidity is too high, it is easier to breathe by holding a wet wash cloth in front of the face.

Almost all local Finnish families have a sauna; some have two. Wednesdays and Saturdays are traditional sauna days during the winter and they often bathe daily during summer.

"We like the sauna because you're warm afterwards for such a long time," says Sylvia Heikkinen of Hebron, who uses her 20-year-old sauna three or four times weekly.

She and her husband, Matti, always follow the Finnish custom of sauna bathing on New Year's Eve to "wash away one's troubles."

Other customs connected with the Finnish saunas seem strange to us today.

For instance, in Finland there used to be professional women sauna maids, usually prim and proper middle-aged women. These early masseuses went from house to house to bathe men and women in their home saunas. Theirs was a highly respected trade and Finland was said to have employed over 300 such maids at one time.

Similarly, throughout Finland and some other parts of Europe, the midwife practiced her trade in the sauna. Physicians were not available and the sauna provided the warmest and cleanest place on the farm in which to give birth. Many Finnish people living in the area today have parents who were born in a sauna.

Sauna births took place for hundreds of years, especially on the farms in the hinterlands of Finland. The sauna was easy to heat, and was sturdily built to withstand the bitter arctic cold.

A Norway woman who was rumored to have been born in a sauna bashfully denied the supposition. But she shyly conceded that she "might have been conceived there."

"I have a feeling this went on," she observed. Making love in the warm, relaxed hot room of the sauna is only one of the many health benefits of sauna bathing.

Purported to be a cure for everything from blackheads and wrinkles to backaches and sinus problems, the sauna bath has long been noted for its tension-dispelling effects, which some claim can fend off diseases.

"It may not cure much," says Eino Heikkinen, 58, of South Paris, somewhat

skeptically. "But, it doesn't hurt anything either."

Like most Finns who can remember being scrubbed and scoured in the sauna bath as children, Heikkinen missed his hot sauna when he lived for a time in the Portland area. He drove to South Paris weekly in order to use any number of saunas built by his friends and relatives.

"I'm used to very hot saunas," he says with a grin. "I haven't gone for any records, but then, I've never had to leave one either."

Unabashed by what some would consider the immodest sharing of baths with friends, the Finns offer their sauna to visitors, who often join in the family ritual. Relatives usually bathe together; larger groups usually divide the sexes.

Centuries ago, when the Finns built their first "community sauna" in Minnesota, a one-of-a-kind lawsuit ensued.

It seems three families built a *savu*, or smoke sauna, and bathed maybe three times a week throughout the year, regardless of weather.

This was during the days when bath tubs and showers were unheard of in Minnesota, where the only available running water was that which flowed in the rivers.

The native settlers observed the sauna bathing custom from a distance. They reported seeing naked men and women "dancing" in the moonlight, and claimed to have heard people "yelping, howling and shrieking." There were even some reports of naked men running from the building and jumping into snowbanks.

An American "sod buster" went to court to get rid of the "pagan temple." The courtroom was packed with curious citizens who had never heard of a sauna, only gossip about a "peculiar church."

It became clear from the court testimony that the Finns were law-abiding citizens who were merely taking their traditional baths. Those who were so quick to criticize the nocturnal scenes were apparently mostly dirt farmers who could have benefited greatly from a bath themselves. The court ruled in favor of the Finns.

Since then, the popularity of the sauna in the homeland has not dwindled. Today, the Finnish population of 5 million people supports 700,000 saunas (that's a private bath for every seven people).

Here in the United States, as in other countries, the sauna culture has gradually

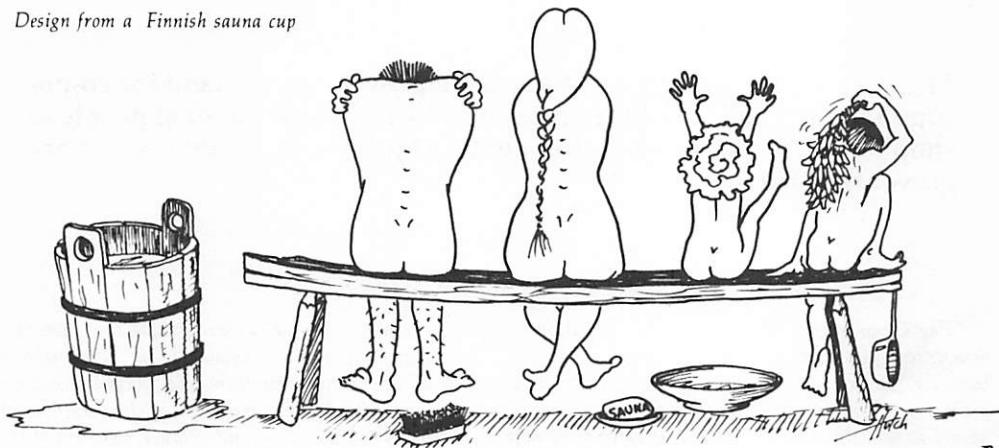
become acknowledged as the most hygienic form of bathing. Public saunas are being built wherever Finnish-Americans settle and, like cross-country skiing, the practice of the hot bath is spreading.

After all, just ask a Finn about a sauna and, before the conversation is through, he is

sure to ask you to try his. Finns have been taking sauna baths since before recorded history. They were born there, and they carried their old people there to die.

For them, the sauna is pure, naked happiness. Or, should we say happy nakedness?

Design from a Finnish sauna cup



...Page 11

any suspicious odors (opium or otherwise) as we were ushered past them toward Number Eleven. There we were shown into a wooden dressing room. The boys discreetly turned their backs while I shed my clothes and wrapped up in an enormous bath towel, and I discreetly turned mine while they donned their old swim trunks; then we entered our own private steam chamber.

Wow! What an experience! We locked the door behind us and gave ourselves over to the heat. It blasted out at us from the boiling water. The wood fire roared happily underneath, making a kind of mystical music as it bubbled and spat. Beside the water tank was a bin full of hot rocks and we had been told that we could create more heat and more steam by dipping the boiling water occasionally onto the rocks. Large buckets were on the bench for us to fill and wash ourselves, or soak our feet.

But all we wanted to do was simply surrender to the heat. And so we did. We sat and sweated. There may be those in the outside world who merely perspire, but in a

sauna no class distinctions exist. Everyone sweats.

We relaxed. We talked quietly. After awhile I had a great urge to sit in the lotus position and meditate and Jonathan followed suit. Chris laid down on the wooden bench and half-dozed. We could hear the party in the next room laughing and talking and occasionally yelping, but it didn't disturb our tranquility. The bubbling of the water and hissing of the steam cushioned all sound.

Finally, I laid down too, on the top bench, where it was hottest. Gentle, warm drips plopped softly on my forehead and I didn't even shift to avoid them. I could have slept. I could have laid there and sweated all night. The kink between my shoulder blades relaxed and vanished. My body emptied all its toxins out through my pores while my mind emptied all its thoughts.

Now and then one of us would stir and get up and hose down feet, arms, and face with cold water, or step into the cool dressing

Page 50...

Oxford County's Food Co-operatives: An Education in Business, Democracy and Thrift

by Ken Morse

The present distribution systems have proven the demand for co-op supplied food and the willingness of an increasing number of people to shop in co-operatives. But, they contain built-in limitations which are preventing further growth.

"The Co-operative Movement is an education in democracy, in thrift, and in the general conduct of business. It makes for altruism as against selfishness; it gives men self-respect when they find they are, after all, able to do something in the way of managing their own social and economic affairs, when the truth comes home to them that business ability is not something to be

found in only a few human beings, but that there is a certain amount of it in everybody. From this experience they acquire confidence in themselves, have a respect for themselves, develop an awareness of their duties and obligations to themselves and to other members of the human race."

E. Forrest Scharf

If you walk by the Good Cheer Hall in South Paris on the last Thursday afternoon of any month, you're liable to spot a few dozen people busily unloading crates of fresh fruits and vegetables, and boxes full of cheese off the back of a rented truck.

Inside the basement of the church, people are piling boxes along the middle of the room, and carting all the cheeses into the kitchen. It's "regional breakdown" time for Oxford County's food cooperatives.

Once the truck is unloaded, co-op members begin to divide up the many kinds of produce, cheeses, breads and bagels into five separate orders, one for each of the five co-ops who've sent workers to help out. After a couple of hectic hours, the job is complete and trucks and cars are loaded and on their way back to their home towns.

When they arrive back at Waterford, Bethel, Buckfield, and Rumford (one batch stays in South Paris), more members are waiting to run a second breakdown.

At the local breakdown, the co-op's produce is divided up, filling orders for each individual member. By 9:30 or 10 in the evening, co-op members are carrying bags full of mushrooms, broccoli and bagels; jugs

of cider; and hunks of cheese to their cars and heading for home.

In the course of one breakdown day, over 800 pounds of cheeses, nearly two tons of fruits and vegetables, and some 150 loaves of bread and dozens of bagels have been moved from the Chelsea Market just north of Boston out into co-op kitchens across the county.

As early as 1970, people in the Oxford Hills area were beginning to look for new ways to get food to their tables. Folks were becoming increasingly aware of nutritional problems and soaring food prices. The consumer often seemed victimized by huge, far-away food profiteers. People no longer ate many whole foods, partly because most outlets supplied an increasing volume of devitalized, highly-processed products full of chemicals. As concern increased, people searched for ways to set up a healthy food supply. Some began to raise larger gardens, and put up more of the winter's food supply.

Many people began to add whole grains, nuts, dried fruits, honey and other natural foods to their tables. Since these



Joanne Clad of the Goat Co-op checks Gutco order at Chelsea Market

some phone bills at first.

In these early days, co-op members were mostly people who were very conscious and careful about their diets. There were a large number of young people, who had been attracted to rural lifestyles because they seemed healthier. However, natural food prices were high, and many families had trouble paying the extra costs. Later, as the co-op network and demand grew, the organizations opened up to all sorts of people, and the whole foods prices became more competitive.

The earliest co-op in the area was formed in 1973, and was called The West Paris Co-op for a short while. However, when too much mail ended up at the old West Paris Co-op Store, the founders knew they must find another name. This problem was being mulled over at a meeting at the home of Norris Perlman, a founder and farmer, when a goat wandered by a window. Somebody suggested the name, "Goat Co-op," and the label has been used ever since.



Chelsea Market

It seems fitting that West Paris was the site of the first "new wave" co-op in the area, since it had been the site of so much "old wave" co-op activity when the Finnish co-operative store thrived in the 1920's, 30's and 40's. Soon, even people from distant towns were buying with the Goat Co-op. Mostly natural foods were ordered, but there were occasional trips to Chelsea to pick up produce.

A year later, the Bridgton Co-op started with intermittent natural foods orders. In the summer of 1975, local co-ops got wind

Massachusetts. WCP was run as a co-op with members from the different co-ops doing different jobs. Each co-op sent a crew to help out in Hallowell. A few days after the breakdown, folks from each co-op attended a meeting to iron out snags in the operation and set up the next month's work.

Bridgton and Goat Co-ops joined WCP and started sending people to Hallowell for produce and cheese. Since both the price and the quality of goods were generally excellent, before long a lot more people were also joining. Growth required improved distribution and bookkeeping systems, and much was learned from the older co-ops in WCP.

Eventually, people from western Maine decided it was time for creation of a separate region for these parts. People from Poland, Auburn, and Canton co-ops joined people from Bridgton and Goat in working out plans for their own region. At a lengthy, late-night meeting, members struggled to choose an appropriate name for the new group. Out of desperation, the label "Gutco" was suggested and, although it's not the prettiest name in the world, it has stuck.

Gutco evolved gradually, at first continuing to order through WCP and sending one truck (for all five co-ops) to Hallowell. Food trucked back from Hallowell was then divided into co-op orders in South Paris. During this period, the old-timers from WCP were helping to set up needed systems, and some Gutco people made practice runs of their own to Chelsea.

By May 1976, Gutco was on its own. It rented a truck and had the food brought back from Chelsea to the Grange Hall in South Paris. Now that the regional center was closer to home, Goat and Bridgton, somewhat bloated by new growth, fostered the emergence of co-ops from their ranks. Out-to-Lunch Co-op (Bethel) and Buckfield Co-op grew out of Goat, and Lovell and Keoka (Waterford) Co-ops grew out of Bridgton. This happened partly because it was easier for people to be involved if the co-op was closer to their own community, and partly because it was now easier for local co-ops to send workers to the regional breakdowns and meetings. As the co-ops spread and grew, the membership diversified, so that the groups began to reflect more of a cross-section of the total community.

During the summer of '76, a debate arose

RISING SUN

this morning
I saw a woman
dressed in grey
move
through the field
yellow
canada lily
led her
she took pollen
from stamens
before the bee
painted
orange stripes
across her brow
touched
her cheeks
orange
rising sun

Winslow Durgin

of monthly produce and cheese orders put together by Western Co-ordinated Produce (WCP), a regional association of 15 member co-ops (you might call it a co-op's co-op) that spread from Waterville to Poland, and from Waterville to Gardiner. WCP distributed from a warehouse in Hallowell, and was one of five such regional associations in Maine. (Now there are twelve, in every part of the state except Aroostock.)

Once every month, WCP gathered orders from each co-op, made one regional order, and sent a truck and crew to Chelsea,

over the best location for the breakdown. Auburn and Canton co-ops favored Auburn, while everyone else favored South Paris. The conflict resulted in Auburn and Canton leaving Gutco to order through local wholesalers.

Later on, Lovell, Poland and Bridgton co-ops folded due to a lack of energy and organization, and some of their members joined other co-ops. For the past year, Gutco has consisted of Buckfield, Goat, Keoka and Out-to-Lunch Co-ops. In January of '78, Better Life Co-op began in Rumford, as Gutco's newest member.

Two summers ago, Maine's growing number of co-ops associated through the statewide Federation of Co-ops, and decided to start a staples warehouse. When this happened, local co-ops began buying their "grain" orders from the Fedco (short for Federation of Co-ops) Warehouse. At first, the co-ops ordered separately. By April of '77, regionwide Gutco grain orders were started and have continued, on a bimonthly basis, ever since.

Since the Fedco Warehouse is also part of the Co-op system, Gutco regularly sends volunteers to help unload trucks, repack and reweigh some items, and help put up orders there. Although this wouldn't be required from a private supplier, and so makes for some extra work, the arrangement has its benefits. Volunteer labor at the co-op warehouse keeps its overhead and prices lower. And the experience offers

participants more education in the background of their food supply, as well as a chance to share shoptalk with co-ops from all over Maine.

The present distribution systems have proven the demand for co-op supplied food and the willingness of an increasing number of people to shop via co-operatives. But they contain built-in limitations which are preventing further growth.

It's easy to imagine the difficulties associated with getting groceries only once a month. It's hard to part with a large sum of money way ahead of time. It's difficult to store many produce items for an entire month. And it's often impossible to comply with a rigid volunteer schedule which concentrates on just a certain few days each month. These limits keep a lot of people from becoming more involved.

In order to overcome these problems, the Gutco co-ops have planned a change from the pre-order system to co-op storefronts. Across Maine, many co-op stores have started up during the last few years, with some of the newest ones operating in Waterville, Bangor, Machias, Belfast and Franklin. Stores attract more people, because shopping is easier. The volunteer work schedule is more flexible, because the co-op operates more of the time; and this allows people from varied walks of life to be involved.

Page 48...

FOR WANT OF A NAIL

Today the workmen tore the barn apart:
The weathered skin has gone. The skeleton
Of hand-hewn timbers, fashioned by an art
Long out of style, stands grimly in the sun.
Some years ago they found a tiny leak
(That could have been repaired) in an old board
Around the metal flashing near the peak.
In callousness this fissure was ignored.
The years of rain and weather caused decay
In shingles, rafters and one corner beam:
When heavy snow fell day by winter day,
The roof collapsed where pressure was extreme.
For lack of labor and a little care,
The barn was lost... a fate our world may share.

Otta Louise Chase



The author as a small boy fishing with his grandfather

Dear J.,

Glad to hear that you can make the fishing trip with us in June. As far as supplies, most of us use two rods — one wet line and one dry line. The most popular fly is the grasshopper. I fish them both wet and dry. They also use mikey Fin's grey ghost and mayfly's on a 10-12 size hook and we use 2-3 lb. leaders. But I have found where they are hitting, they will take anything, and when they aren't, nothing works. Almost forgot the other important item, bring your own jug. In case of frost, or snake bite.

See you,
Gordon

There it was: an invitation to join a select seven for four days of trout fishing on a private lake in Maine. How humbly some dreams begin.

With duffle, flies and jug, I linked up with Gordon. I had flies enough for every

conceivable fish and water. The station wagon was jammed with gas-cans, several cartons of food, and enough fishing gear to last us a month. We headed north to join the other six at the lake; I was unwinding and only half listening to Gordon.

"...then there was the year we put dishwashing liquid in Don's pisspot. Whole thing foamed over. He was halfway to the hospital before we caught him.

"We usually fish the big lake. There's a river feeding, and one draining, but most of us do pretty good on the lake.

"Bill's a bit different. Always wantin' to fish a feeder or climb up a mountain to the pond... never content with just fishin' the lake. None of us been fool enough to go up with him."

I supposed that this might be some Downeast psychology designed to provide Bill with a companion. I'd have to wait and see.

"Bill ever have any luck with that pond?"

A Maine Fishing Story

by *J. Featherstone Privy*

"How humbly some dreams begin."

"Always comes back smilin'. Bill don't say much."

After ten more miles of winding dirt road, tantalizing glimpses of a boiling river rushing off through the forest, and three more fishing stories, we arrived.

"Where you been, Gordon? Boats're all in the water. Fire's started. When's supper?"

"Everybody puts a dollar up on that nail. Biggest redspot takes the money. Salmon don't count; used to, until Charles won the pot five years runnin' with salmon he caught trollin'."

"What's a redspot?" I asked.

"That's your native Eastern brook trout... square-tail... you know, speckled trout."

I was beginning to get the idea.

"I'll win the money again this year," said Charles, casually. "It's all in the presentation."

Fishing for trout, two men to a boat, with a fly rod, was new to me; bits of my brand-new

wetline lost in the motor attested to that. I saw no redspots that night, until Gordon and I returned to camp and looked in the kitchen sink. An eighteen-inch brookie, deep and beautifully colored, lay there ready to claim the money on the nail.

"How did you catch it?" I asked.

"Flick of the wrist," said Charles.

"I mean, what did you use?"

"Fly," he answered, with the wisdom of eighty years.

I had been shown where the fish were and, now, what one looked like; catching one was obviously going to be left up to me.

Breakfast came early, with stacks of buttered toast, home-fries, pyramids of sausage, pan-fried eggs and, of course, fresh brook trout.

"Pass the ketchup."

"Ketchup on trout?"

"Can't stand mustard."

BitterSweet Notes:

We have received two intriguing letters from readers recently. The first comes from Inez Farrington, long-time resident of Stoneham, now living at Ledgeview Nursing Home in West Paris, who says she is only one of three people still living who remember her tale.

SMALL TOWN MYSTERY

Rain had followed one day after another for many days in the small town of East Stoneham. Already, brooks and Lake Kewaydin were rushing over their banks. The men anxiously watched the wooden dams, knowing they would not stand much more pressure.

Amidst all the pouring rain, a strange woman walked into town. She went to the home of a middle-aged couple who lived with one set of parents. They also had a young son at home who was much too young to recall the occasion.

When daylight came, the town woke to find both dams and three bridges washed away. Since the town stood on almost flat land, the water spread out so far it did little damage. No one was obliged to leave home. There was no way to get in or out of town.

All this happened many years before I can remember, but I do recall my aunt telling of looking out the window and watching what was then the outdoor bathroom of my future home floating down the main road.

As days went by, people cleaned up the town and rebuilt the bridges and dams. No injuries had been reported. Suddenly, someone recalled that the out-of-town lady had not been seen for some time. My aunt also remembered seeing the lady walk down the road on the afternoon before the flood.

Members of the town had been told she was Miss Annie Patch, visiting at her friend's home. Her friends sent out the word that she must have slipped out of the house and been swept away by the water during the flood.

Forty years passed. The old people died. The young boy grew up and had children and

the mystery of Miss Patch became a legend. There was no one left living who had been connected with it in any way.

Then, a young, newly-married couple bought the land where the house which Miss Patch had visited once stood. They planned to build their future home there. The owner, a Mr. Barker, started to remove and rebuild the cellar which by now amounted only to a stone wall. To his amazement, his tools revealed a human skeleton.

In a town the size of Stoneham, the event was indeed big news. The natives knew at once that Miss Patch had been found. As word of the discovery got out, the town was turned into a carnival. These days, one murder gets very little notice. But this one brought reporters from all over, including Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Stoneham people are not easily upset. Everyone knew the missing woman had been found. They all knew who had been responsible for the disappearance, but they figured an event of forty years ago might as well be forgotten.

The bones were collected and sent to Augusta for some unknown reason. But the mystery was never entirely solved, since the head was never found. The town was searched from one end to the other, but without results.

The young couple at once changed their plans and built their home elsewhere.

There will always be some questions surrounding the strange occurrence, but there will never be any answers. Who was Annie Patch? Why did she come to our town? Why did they kill her? Why did they never report her as missing?

Just a mystery to add to one of the many small towns the make up America.

LAKE COUNTRY HISTORY

"In the newspaper recently, there was a picture of a big cat track taken someplace in northern Maine, along with several reports of people sighting an animal they thought was a lion," writes Lucretia Douglas of West Baldwin, as an introduction to her story:

There were mountain lions around the Sebago area of Maine in the 1800's.

When I was a girl, I saw a picture of a black panther killed by men named Dyer and Kennison. As near as I can remember, they killed him on Webrow Mountain. The cat was so large, he reached the whole length of the door — probably close to seven feet long hanging in the doorway by his rear feet.

My grandfather first told me how "Panther Peak" got its name. It seems one Dave Whitten, still just a boy, was going to work for a man named Dyke. He had a little mongrel dog. They started out to cut some wood, when the dog began to bark and peer up into a tree. A big panther crouched up in the tree. Dyke, armed only with an old muzzle-loading musket, took careful aim and fired. The cat leaped from the tree and took off up the mountain, trailing blood, the little dog after him.

Dave, fearing for his dog and with only an axe for protection, took after the dog and Dyke brought up the rear. He found he was out of shot and the only thing he had to load his musket with was an assortment of rusty nails.

The cat crawled under a ledge. Dave called his dog back as Dyke prepared to shoot again, but apparently the charge of nails burst open the barrel of the musket, tore off one of Dyke's fingers and only made the cat mad. He leaped out from under the ledge, growling and snarling in fury. Dave let go the dog, as Dyke swung at the cat with his useless musket. The little dog grabbed the cat by the tail, and when he turned to seize the dog, Dave split his head open with a lucky blow from his axe.

He was a big panther, a real mountain lion. Ever after, the top of the ledge where he took shelter has been known as "Panther Peak."

Many times, when out deer hunting, I would climb up and sit on the ledge and watch for deer. The view is beautiful — the range of White Mountains in the distance; the twin lakes at sunset are spectacular.

Once, when there was snow on the

ground, I sat down on the ledge on my "hot seat" and must have been there a long time, for suddenly I heard a little noise below me behind some dwarf pines and junipers. Thinking it might be a deer, I kept waiting but saw nothing. Finally, I had to leave if I was going to get to the road before dark. It was quiet going in the snow, but I had taken only a few steps when I caught the flash of something through the pines.

When I got down there, I found the tracks of a good-sized bob-cat and where he had caught and eaten a mouse in the snow.

Not long after that, on the way home from work (I worked the second shift), it must have been around 1:00 a.m. when I pitched down over the hill and there was a big yellowish animal standing in the middle of the road. First, I thought it was a deer, until it jumped. In one leap, it hit the stone wall beside the road and then just stood there. It was a very big cat. My daughter-in-law, who had been asleep beside me, said his head looked as big as a bushel basket.

I remember an old Maine guide telling me about when he was young (if he was alive today, he would be one hundred and one), he was walking home from the village in the early evening. The sun's last rays lit up something laying along a big limb of an old hemlock that hung out over the road.

It was a huge cat, and he knew it was a panther when its long tail started lashing. He didn't dare turn his back and run. Filling his hands and pockets with rocks, he slowly backed around the limb; all the time looking the cat in the eye. He didn't dare run until he was out of sight of the cat, and then he raced home, got his brothers with their guns, ran back but the cat had disappeared.

The next morning they found the carcass of a deer hanging in the woven wire fence about a hundred yards from their house. The whole rear half of the deer had been eaten, and its neck had been broken. They never did catch sight of the cat again.

Back in 'twenty-five, when I was ten years old, we used to go to the "pictures" in our Buick touring car. We would sit patiently on the hard chairs while they changed the reels. The words were printed on the screen and, off to one side, a piano player tried to match his music to the story.

I remember one night in early fall, when we got home, Mama, my brother and I were

The Old Hotel

by Margery Eliscu



The old cemetery

The spring house



I went to a girls' camp near the little town of Harrison, Maine, during the late 1930's. They were depression years, but in 1936, at age eleven, it didn't matter to me. The Maine countryside was as full of pine trees and blue lakes as it is today, and I was completely content in a faded uniform of gray, middy-style, with pleated bottoms. When I think back to those summers, I remember long, happy days walking along weed-filled dirt roads behind Harrison or nearby Waterford, where, for the first time in my life, I came to feel something from the earth and know I belonged.

There was an old hotel. Well, maybe it wasn't old then. We campers had to hike to it, as a twenty-mile trial, in order to be allowed the prize sport of the season: a climb up Mt. Washington.

I see us now, a group of ten or twelve

walking with our brown-bagged lunches and our gray sweaters around our waists, sash-fashion — the envy of the rest of the camp. The last few miles were uphill, and by the time we were told by those up front that the hotel was in sight, my sweaters had made a belt of perspiration, and my dry throat made me wish I hadn't eaten the orange out of my lunch bag.

The hotel was to the left of the road, a large white four-storied clapboard building with a wide veranda across the front. Although the grounds were neat and the driveway clear of growth, I don't recall ever seeing any people around. I know we overran the lawn racing for the best spot to have a picnic.

There was supposed to be a spring behind the hotel, and some of us skipped along the marked side walkway looking for it. The

path, cooled by trees, smelled of damp pine needles and I thought then (and still do) that it was the best fragrance in the world.

The spring house appeared in a clearing — a stone structure with a wide expanse of windows. We stared in at the flowing shadowed water and then, entering the door, stood at water's edge, soaking in the moistness while our counsellor warned us not to drink from the hanging tin cup.

Several of us lay on our stomachs and drank, and I filled my canteen. I meant to keep that water forever as a souvenir of the summer.

With our bellies full of spring water, we joined the other campers who had found a shaded area between the hotel and an old fenced-off graveyard. We fished our sandwiches from their bags — peanut butter and jelly — ambrosia to a child who has just walked ten country miles. There were little waxed-paper packages down at the bottom of the bags with carrot and celery sticks, cookies, and dried fruit.

When lunch was over and we'd all traded goodies, we climbed over the fieldstone which separated us from the graves. The stones bore large epitaphs of poetry, some of it humourous and home-written. The older, more sophisticated girls impressed us with words of recognition, like "Oh, Words-worth," and "Keats!".

In 1958, I returned to Maine on vacation, with a husband and four children. I asked around Harrison and Waterford that summer, but no one remembered the old hotel. "It sounds like any number of old places that used to be around here," said the man who owned the general store in the village, but he couldn't help me more than that. I searched all that summer from Portland to Fryeburg.

"At the side of a highway?" my husband would protest, as he slowed the car down next to a fenced-off cemetery. Maine had progressed like the rest of the country, and I would answer sadly, "It could be."

That year my family fell in love with Maine, too, and we bought property and built ourselves a summer camp by the side of Crystal Lake in Harrison. In time, nostalgia gave way to these newer summers and I stopped looking for my childhood.

Then, in July of 1967, it found me.

We were driving along the backroads with some local friends. I was feeling sleepy from the warmth of the day, not following the

conversation, when someone said, "Summit Spring Hill."

I cried out, "That's the name. That's it! I'm sure."

We rode up a dirt road that looked like every other dirt road in Maine. We were just two miles behind our camp. I watched as the road narrowed up a hill. And then, there it was — a picture from childhood, distorted and unreal.

The driveway was overgrown with weeds and coarse grass, and the old hotel loped badly to one side. The doors in front were boarded up and the windows hung with dirty, tattered curtains, once white and now turned sooty gray. It was an Alfred Hitchcock setting. I stared at the hotel, fascinated by its decay. There was a real estate sign on the porch and we drove down to the village to find the agent.

An hour later we were back. The real estate lady took us around to the rear of the building and up rickety stairs. "Well, I guess I won't need a key," she said.

The back door hung open and we looked through a dark narrow hall into another decade. The entrance telescoped into a large kitchen where spiderwebbed pots and pans, dishes and utensils sat and rotted, unaware of time. We could see counters scattered with boxes of crackers, swollen cereal boxes, and rusty open coffee tins. We walked along the hall, stepping carefully on the spongy floor while the real estate agent pointed out the holes to avoid.

In the kitchen, we tried to figure out a reason for the coffee pot being perched half in the sink and half on the counter. The sugar bowls in the cabinet were hardened with age and bug life existed in every corner not already occupied by mouse droppings or silverware.

We pushed through swinging doors and found ourselves in a spacious dining room. The tables were set and the chairs sat at their proper places as though waiting for the dinner guests to return for the next seating. On the sideboard, yellow and dust-ridden, was a Westchester County phone book from 1936 and I looked up my aunt's old four-digit number.

We walked from room to room. The beds were crumpled with filthy old sheets, some of which were blackened and tossed on the floor. A curtain moved slightly as a breeze entered through a crack, and we told each other that the place was haunted. We

explored until we were overcome by dank odors and gloomy rooms.

Outside, the country surrounding us was a forest. Someplace in that tangle would be the graveyard. I looked down at my bare legs and thought of the tics and snakes that must inhabit that overgrowth. My husband started the search alone while I sat in the car with the real estate lady, wondering when I had grown so old.

Then, a shout from the woods: "I've found it!" and, forgetting all else, I ran on eleven-year-old feet and forced my way through the thick brush. I stood in the little old graveyard and once again searched among the crumbling ruins to read the poems. We had to pull tall weeds away from many of the stones and much of the writing was difficult to make out. But, I'd found the cemetery, and now I wanted to find the spring.

There was a tiny remains of a damp path and we followed it deep into the woods. At a clearing I looked up to find my beautiful stone spring house exactly as I had stored it away in my mind. We looked through the wide windows and saw water standing still in a pool, plugged up by leaves. The bent tin cup hung from a rusted nail where it was

totally encased in spider-webs.

We found the old hotel just in time. Later that week, two youths were arrested for using the old place as a hideaway for storing and using dope. The hotel and grounds were patrolled and we didn't go back again. In time, new owners had the building torn down.

A couple of years later, we moved to Maine. We couldn't find the spot where the old hotel had stood. Nor the cemetery. I hoped the gravestones were still there. As for the spring, to this day I know that it exists. I know it as surely as I can remember the taste of that cool, sweet water. My ancient canteen is in our attic. The cap is permanently stuck closed. When I jiggle it, I believe I can hear something. You see, I got a new canteen that Christmas in 1936. I was never able to bring myself to empty the water from the old one.

Eliscu, a columnist and writer with James Newspapers, lives in Poland.

*Farmer Wil took his wife to the fair
And found the auction beyond compare.
He bought everything in sight
And packed the car up so tight,
That he left his bewildered wife there.*

Are you a limerick lover?

Why not put your creative rhyming skills to the test in **BitterSweet's**
CURRENT LIMERICK CONTEST!

A \$25 cash prize will be awarded for the most original (fit to print) amusing verse.

Submissions must be postmarked on or before July 1.

Winner will be announced in the August issue
and contest entries will be published in subsequent magazines.



Farther Out

by C. C. Matolcsy

As private individuals, we are seeing more and more of our rights infringed upon and our decision-making possibilities removed. What's more, we are paying for the privilege of losing our rights.

It may come as a shock to the present generation, and even to their parents, but the present federal income tax was not adopted until 1913. An unsuccessful attempt at taxation was made in 1862, only to be ruled unconstitutional ten years later.

On the occasion of the 1913 Act, Jimmy Elms predicted with remarkable foresight that this would be the beginning of the end for the average American and the country as he then knew it.

Jimmy was not famous and most people today would not recognize his name. He was born in 1859 and lived at one time in Paris at the Cleasby House, now owned by John Cullinan. He went to work at the age of eight in a shoe factory. Later he established James Elms Hardware in Auburn.

It is unclear in the memories of the few left who knew him exactly what Jimmy Elms meant. He could have seen a threat to small business in the increasing size of taxes.

Perhaps he meant that taxation would

inevitably lead to a weakening of the power of the American people to determine their individual course as promised by the Bill of Rights.

Whatever his exact thoughts, they may not be as important as his intuition that this act would severely and adversely affect the future of the American people.

The most obviously direct and negative effect of the income tax is, of course, the reduction of the net income of a worker during his/her most productive years.

The less obvious, and far more insidious, aspect is that workers' ability to decide what they will do with earned money is lessened directly by the government's doing their thinking and spending for them.

Let us take, for example, federal funding of education. The government funds certain programs in our schools. This may be all well and good, but is a certain program necessarily one we either need or want?

Voters have frequently been guilty of adopting a program "because if we don't get

the money, some other town will." The particular program may be given for a specific time limit; if this is the case, then we as voters in a school district must decide whether we want to continue the program at our own expense later on.

Another example is the water clean-up program initiated by the government to give us swimmable, fishable and drinkable water in the near future. Many feel there is no choice but to place the environment first if we are to leave a world fit for our children and our children's children. Others hold that whatever the results, jobs and industry must come first. Hence, legislation and enforcement of that legislation become necessary.

The haphazard ways in which our money has been spent on this program boggles the mind.

On the one hand, septic systems, to be paid by private individuals, have been imposed on some small towns of limited financial resources. While, on the other hand, slightly larger towns have received millions of dollars in grants and loans for treatment plants and sewer systems.

Consider the number of jobs which are either directly funded under a government program or are in some way indirectly connected to government funding. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to find work which does not have some connection to government money.

Another consideration of the grants-and-loans idea is that they inevitably lead to "creaming off the top." Recently the Export-Import Bank was asked by Westinghouse for a loan of \$600 billion for two nuclear reactors to be sent to the Philippines. The final estimate was \$1.1 billion for one nuclear reactor. David Biem, an official of the Bank, was asked about alleged payoffs. He replied that it would be practically impossible to determine rake-offs of a few million in a billion-dollar project.

Given the above situation, the only way in which an investigation can be undertaken is if powerful private interests object.

Let's take the average American. If he found this kind of affair to run against his grain, he would be hard-put to find an ear for his complaints.

It is not that the government is evil, or even bent on developing new sources of power. Rather, it is the natural effect of

being fed greater and greater quantities of money, which leads to a larger and more entrenched bureaucracy.

Again, let us look at our "little guy" who is directly affected by a decision of his town regarding government funding. He either sits back and grumbles; or takes his case to his representatives, or to the particular government agency involved (if he is lucky enough to know which one it is). What then? He finds that the people he finally contacts have never even heard of the situation; they are sympathetic, but they cannot help him.

Approaching the "big guy" is difficult. He is firmly insulated against the little guy's position because of his assistants, secretaries, departments, divisions, and the like. He probably couldn't help even if he wanted to, anyway.

What all this boils down to is that the government is taking our money in the form of taxes, and is giving it back to us, but it is the government's decision of how, when, where, and how much to spend. Arguments are that this is the only way to affect the most beneficial results, notwithstanding lobbies, private interest groups and professional grantsmen (yes, there are such animals).

Many objected to the nuclear power plant at Seabrook; many have opposed off-shore drilling. In both cases, the government bureaucrats kindly, and with great patience, assure us that they know what they are doing, and that our best interests will be protected.

As private individuals, we are seeing more and more of our rights infringed upon and our decision-making possibilities removed. What's more, we are paying for the privilege of losing our rights. We are fast becoming victims of our own apathy while our identities as individuals are relegated to columns of statistics.

You would think we might have learned something from the experience of the 1830's. At that time there was actually a surplus in federal reserves. The government benevolently divided the money among the states, who commenced to over-extend themselves with projects, and became bankrupt.

Welcome to the age of the benevolent, bureaucratic dictatorship.

Can You Place It?

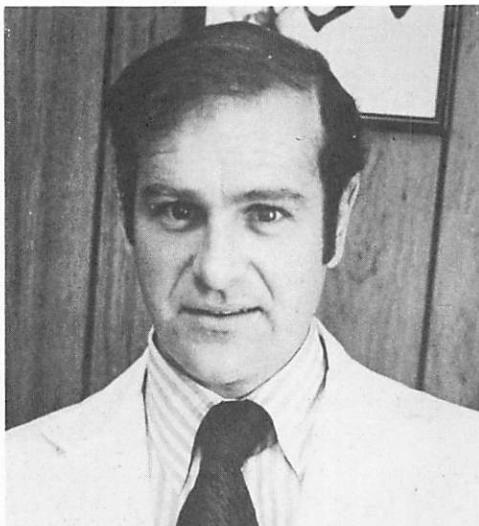




Last month's **Can You Place It** showed the old C. B. Cummings mill at the head of Main Street in Norway. The picture, contributed by former Norway Town Manager Don McAllister, was taken in the 1880's.

Medicine For the Hills

by Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.



Dr. Michael Lacombe

ANTIBIOTICS — A PANACEA?

"A cold will last seven days with medicine, and a week without."

Of all drugs prescribed, none is more often misused than the antibiotic. There is more misconception, argument, paranoia, and bitterness surrounding the proper use of antibiotics than any other area of medicine. Patients, when deprived of antibiotics which they think necessary, will often imply that the doctor is deliberately withholding an available cure.

Their attitude is understandable. A scant forty years ago, in the pre-antibiotic era, life was much shorter than now, largely due to infectious disease. Young people died of pneumonia, venereal disease resulted in sterility or worse, and children with simple ear infections died of complicating meningitis. We were literally plagued with

bacterial infections.

Then, with one of the greatest discoveries in history, certain molds were found to possess a substance poisonous to other plants (bacteria). This substance, penicillin, was isolated and, with sulfonamides (sulfa drugs), ushered in the antibiotic era.

Together, the two drugs appeared to be "cure-alls." They controlled many of the bacterial infections of which we were dying. For a time, penicillin and sulfa were all we had for antibiotics; they were given a try in virtually every disease, whether they were of an infectious nature or not.

If we have learned nothing else in the past forty years, our experience with antibiotics has taught us that the notion that antibiotics will cure anything infectious is, at best, wasteful; at worst, downright dangerous. At the same time, we have found other antibiotics far more effective than penicillin and sulfa for certain infections.

We have seen bacteria develop resistance to antibiotics to which they were formerly sensitive.

We have found antibiotics powerless against the host of infectious diseases caused by viruses.

We have learned that certain bacteria residing within us are beneficial and that killing them off with antibiotics can, in turn, cause problems.

We have described and are now plagued with a distressingly large list of diseases actually caused by antibiotic use.

Finally, we have learned that no disease can be cured by the use of antibiotics alone.

What follows in this and next month's column is a discussion of ways in which antibiotics are misused and the consequences of that misuse. The discussion is not subject for debate; every medical student has been taught the facts about antibiotics. That these principles are so often ignored may be blamed on both doctor and patient alike. Sadly, in medicine as in television programming and politics, the consumer usually gets what he wants, rather than what he needs.

Almost all infections in our area of the world are caused by bacteria or by viruses. Bacteria are microscopic plants and, with certain qualifications, are killed or controlled by antibiotics. Species of bacteria cause impetigo, some pneumonias, gonorrhea, some cases of diarrhea, and some kinds of spinal meningitis.

Viruses are encased bits of chromosome material, too small to be seen with a microscope. They are unaffected by antibiotics. Certain viruses cause shingles, some pneumonias, some venereal infections, diarrhea, and certain kinds of meningitis.

Just as viruses are totally unaffected by all antibiotics, a certain bacteria may be totally unaffected by a given antibiotic. For example, a bacteria which frequently causes meningitis in children is not affected by penicillin at all.

In short:

1. Viruses are unaffected by antibiotics.
2. Viral infections are not always easily distinguished from bacterial infections.
3. When treating bacterial infections, for each bug there is a right drug.
4. An effort should be made to distinguish bacterial from viral infections and, if bacterial, to identify which bacterium is causing the problem.

Too often these principles are forsaken in favor of a shotgun approach to infection. The attitude becomes: "If it's bacterial, I'll get it with this big, powerful antibiotic in whopping doses, and if it's viral, it doesn't matter anyway — I'll take the gamble."

To understand the error of this approach and its potential danger, we need first to understand the consequences of taking an antibiotic. First, the infection may not be treated at all, but the patient, harboring a false sense of security, thinks some good is being done. Consider the following case report:

S.E.M., age two, enters the emergency room in a near-coma. Five days ago her doctor began treating her ear infection with penicillin (the wrong drug in this case). Her fever continued. She became more drowsy and, in short, developed meningitis. Her parents delayed further medical attention despite her worsening condition because of their faith in penicillin. She nearly died.

Secondly, taking antibiotics raises the possibility of bacterial super-infection. This means, simply stated, that a new, superimposed bacterial infection may result from antibiotic use. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, she also rushes in to re-populate a sterile environment. Thus, a woman takes ampicillin for a bladder infection; the ampicillin treats the offending infection but also kills off the bacteria normally

Page 45...

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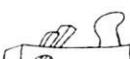


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Goings On

ART

DENNIS DREHER: Geometric Painting and Sculpture at Hebron's Hupper Gallery, May 7-May 27. Gallery hours, weekdays 9-5; Sun. 2-5.

HEBRON ACADEMY STUDENT EXHIBIT: Drawing, Painting, Sculpture and Furniture, May 28-June 4, Hupper Gallery.

SCULPTURE & DRAWINGS by EDWIN GAMBLE: through May 7, Bates College Treat Gallery. Gallery hours: weekdays 1-4:30, 7-8; Sundays 2-5. Free admission.

MUSIC

MARY DAVENPORT, Contralto: Singing 19th Century German songs, May 10, 8 p.m., Bates College Lounge, Lewiston. Free admission.

JACK ROBERTS, Piano: May 17, 8 p.m., Bates College Lounge, Lewiston. Free admission.

STATE STRING FESTIVAL: Oxford Hills High School gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium, South Paris, May 6, 4 p.m.

SENIOR CONCERT, Oxford Hills High School auditorium, South Paris, May 12, 8 p.m.

STRING NIGHT: Oxford Hills High School auditorium, South Paris, June 1, 7:30 p.m.

JUNIOR HIGH BAND AND CHORAL CONCERT: Oxford Hills Junior High School, South Paris, June 8, 7:30 p.m.

THE GOLDEN STRING QUARTET: First Congregational Church, South Paris, May 19, 7:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Oxford Hills Music Boosters & the First Congregational Church.

SENIOR HIGH SPRING CONCERT: Chorus, Band & Stage Band, Telstar Regional High School, Bethel, May 16, 7:30 p.m.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SPRING CONCERT: Chorus, Band, plus a musical, Telstar Regional High School, Bethel, May 25, 7:30 p.m.

ETC.

POETRY READING & WORKSHOP: featuring Miriam Dyak, poet, Bates College's Chase Hall, May 11.



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SUN DAY: Wednesday, May 3. Celebration of alternative forms of energy (especially solar, wind, water) and demonstration of cottage industries and crafts at Oxford Hills High School. Preceded by a Sunrise Ceremony on Streaked Mountain.

A FOOD FESTIVAL: May 20, 10-2, Oxford Hills High School cafeteria. Sponsored by Oxford County Community Services Food & Nutrition Program. Demonstrations, speakers, exhibits and films on the theme: "Is Your Diet A Trick Or A Treat?"

SPECIALS

TO LAUGH, PERCHANCE TO DREAM: Theatre at Monmouth's Spring Tour offering excerpts from Shakespeare's works, assembled especially for those unfamiliar and uncomfortable with Shakespearean theatre, May 11, Buckfield High School gymnasium, 12:45 p.m. Open to the public. Free admission.

GOOD TIMES MINSTRELS: Sponsored by the S.A.D. 39 Scholarship Committee, May 5, 6, Buckfield High School gymnasium, 8 p.m.



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Ayah

We consider your comments

and suggestions an important means of discovering our readers' interests. Representative and appropriate letters will be published as space allows. Most likely answers won't be necessary, and probably the only response you'll receive will be a most appropriate "Ayah!"

FAN MAIL

We think you have a fine magazine, and have enjoyed reading it very much.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry T. Anderson
Owls Head

Loved the articles and poem by Pat White Gorrie! She's our former neighbor.

Your fine magazine makes us want to visit your beautiful area in the near future.

Glenda Bauer
Prospect Park, Penn.

FUN TIME

Dear Editor:

The *Inroads* section of your March issue... reports on page 23 that it takes 50 gallons of maple sap to make one quart of maple syrup. I believe this is an error that would be discouraging to those about to embark on this glorious spring avocation.

Here in Locke Mills, we find that the ratio is about 32 to 1. That is, one gallon for 32 gallons of sap. Making syrup is a lively, time-consuming fun time. Productive, too!

Thank you. And while I am at it, thank you for **BitterSweet**. Your issues are a highlight of our month!

Anthony R. Stone
Locke Mills

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A ten-year-old customer in the waiting area took it all in and remarked admiringly, "Lady, I swear you have wall-to-wall ears."

Jeannie Kilkore
South Paris



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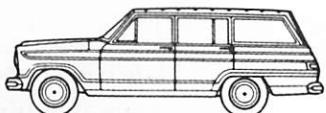
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FOOD FOR SPRING

Once folks have had their fill of dandelion greens, it's time to try some rhubarb.

When harvesting rhubarb, it's important to remove the largest stalks first. Use a sharp knife and cut all the leaves away from the stem. Rhubarb stalks are delicious to eat, but rhubarb leaves are poisonous. The leaves should be disposed of in the compost heap or in an incinerator. Never leave them where a child might be tempted to nibble on one.

Wash the stalks, dice and boil until mushy in small amount of water. Add sugar to taste. For a delicious change, stir a package of frozen strawberries into the hot rhubarb sauce.

Rhubarb Pie

Ingredients:

4 cups diced rhubarb
1½ cups sugar
2 Tablespoons flour
1 beaten egg
Pinch salt
1 Tablespoon soft margarine or butter
Pastry for 2-crust pie

Beat egg, add dry ingredients and soft butter. Add rhubarb and mix well.

Line pie plate with pastry (10" pie plate is best). Dust with flour, fill with rhubarb mixture and top with crust. Make a few holes for steam to escape.

I spread my top crust with Crisco, sprinkle with flour and then dip pastry brush in milk and paint over pie before baking. It makes the pie pretty and the crust extra flaky and brown.

Bake pie an hour in 375° oven. You may substitute either fresh or frozen strawberries for a portion of the rhubarb if you wish.

Rhubarb Ice Cream

Ingredients:

2 cups cubed rhubarb
3/4 cup sugar
2 egg yolks, beaten
1 cup heavy cream
1 Tablespoon lemon juice
2 egg whites

Combine rhubarb and sugar. Cook in covered pan over low heat until tender. Cool.

Mix egg yolks, cream, lemon juice and rhubarb. Pour in refrigerator tray. Freeze until firm. Beat egg whites and two Tablespoons of sugar.

Remove rhubarb mix from refrigerator. Break up in crumbs. Beat until fluffy. Add egg whites.

Return to refrigerator tray and freeze.
Serves 6, for a different and good dessert.

Rhubarb Bread

Ingredients:

Sift $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda together. Add to sugar, mix with 1 cup sour milk (or buttermilk) and 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Add 1½ cups diced rhubarb and ¾ cup chopped walnuts (optional). Pour into two loaf pans. Crumble ½ cup sugar with 1 Tablespoon butter to make crumb mixture. Sprinkle over bread dough. Bake 1 hour at 325°.

Serve hot with butter or cold with cream cheese. Recipe can be halved; but chances are, you'll be glad you made two loaves.

It is very simple to freeze rhubarb for winter use. Just dice and put right amount for pie (or sauce, or bread) into plastic bags and freeze. No sugar is needed.

Lucretia Douglas



Sara Jane Elliot, Decorator 743-2672

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Estelle Pottle Stone

PEACE & PRIVACY

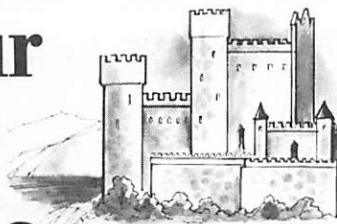
Estelle Pottle Stone "couldn't live anywhere else." Home is Otisfield, in the house where she was born 70 years ago.

"I love it here...the peace...the privacy. Even as a young girl teaching school in Vermont, or Downeast on the coast in Dennisville, I couldn't wait to get home, weekends. When my mother became ill, I came back for good and taught in a little white one-room schoolhouse on the Otisfield Gore Road. Loved that little school, even in winters when it was all I could do to get to it through the snowdrifts, and, of course, I had to keep the fire going in the woodstove so the children wouldn't freeze. Sometimes I cooked them hot cocoa.

The Pottles and Stones are names you run across often in Otisfield and nearby towns. Both families have been here for generations, since every home was a farm, and Otisfield had its own sawmill and a "cooper shop" where wooden barrels were made. Huge oxen pulled logs down the main road, which is now Route 121, to the Grand Trunk Railroad Station in Oxford.

Near the sawmill was the general store once owned by Estelle's husband's grandfather, and an apple canning business. "Everybody had apple trees in those days and crews would go from one orchard to the next gathering them. They'd be packed in barrels to ship out, or canned; or cider would be made out of them. It was one of the ways people made ends meet, I guess. And, of course, there was timber."

Is your home your castle?



Sir Edward Coke once said: "A man's

house is his castle." Do you feel the same way about yours? If you do, you'll want to protect your home and its contents from destruction or loss.



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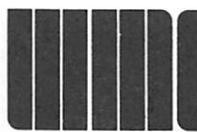
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For Sale: *Whispering Winds* by Georgia Shaw Prescott, a collection of free-form verse, recalling the author's rural childhood in Hollis, Maine and celebrating the country's natural grandeur, spread from coast to coast. Contact Georgia S. Robertson, Buckfield, Me. 04220.

Will Buy: Odd pieces of Fiestaware. Write Flynn, RFD 1, Buckfield, Me. 04220.

Available: Illusion Magic Show for All Occasions. Specializing in the Floating Lady, and featuring Jeff Mills, Bryant Pond & Scott Wight, Newry. For information on bookings, call Bryant Pond 33.

Available: *The Consumer Information Catalog*, a catalog of selected federal publications of consumer interest on topics ranging from child care to gardening, health to energy conservation. Published by the Consumer Information Center and available free of charge at the Norway Library, among other locations.

The first person to report the correct solution of last month's brain teaser was Ethel Bow of Oxford, who figured out in no time that the Norwegian drinks water and the Japanese owns the zebra. A list of all those who solved the April puzzle will appear in the June issue.



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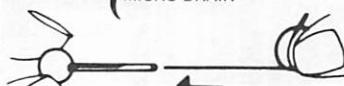
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BRAIN TEASER TWO

In a certain kingdom, all missionaries only tell the truth and all slaves only tell lies.

Three strangely dressed men come before the king. The king asks the first "What are you, slave or missionary?" The first mumbles something the king cannot hear.

The king then asks the second, "What did the first say?" The second replies, "He says he's a slave."

The king then asks the third man if the second is telling the truth and he replies, "Yes."

Which are slaves and which are missionaries?

The earliest postmarked correct answer will win its sender a free subscription to BitterSweet.

...Page 38

Chickadees crowd outside the organdy-framed windows of Mrs. Stone's living room, snacking on sunflower and millet seeds. Browalia blooms in blue profusion in and out among the hanging vines against the backdrop of her soft green, newly-papered walls. Her husband Ellis, who oversees the Carding Division at Robinson Manufacturing Company, is the gardener. Even the cellar is filled with plants warmed by grow-lights, and flowers grown out of the old stone walls down there where seeds accidentally found their way into the cracks.

"On the Fourth of July there will be at least 40 of us, four generations, in our summer place....the log cabin across the road on Thompson Lake. We have a wonderful time then! The little ones dive and swim in the same spot where I learned to swim as a child."

"I'm glad for the zoning law here. But I wonder, sometimes, what will happen as the old farms are sold or torn down or the land broken up. It'll be a shame if it ever changes. It's so lovely here, so quiet, just the way it is."

P.W.G.

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Recollections

KEEPIN' THE ROADS OPEN IN WINTER, About 1915

as told to Fred Colby, South Paris

It took "team work" in them days.

The method was to chain a plank across the front runners of a loggin' sled, and hitch two or three teams of hosses up front.

Jest a little of the snow was pushed to one side, but the hosses trampled it down a lot, an' the plank smoothed it off.

No one farmer had more than one team of hosses, so two or three farmers worked together. Of course, only one did the drivin' at one time, an' sometimes the driver would push the other teams harder than his own, which caused some feelin', but not much was said — and after all, they did usually take turns.

When there was a lot of snow, the first team had about all it could do to walla through, makin' a path for the others. The wooden pole only went as far as the team nearest the sled. Beyond that, chains were hitched on to help pull the sled.

Sometimes, someone had to go alongside and brush the front hosses with a switch to get 'em all pullin'. Even a good driver could only get about four hosses pullin' at the same time.

Hosses weren't so dumb either. Take our "lazy" one that was always willin' to let the others do the pullin'. Because he was back near the sled, so he could be "persuaded" easier, he was sometimes pushed over into the snowbank when they went around a corner. Then he would put his shoulder to the collar and really pull — until they got to the straight-away again.

Three reins in each hand — one for each team — was a hand-full. You can imagine what fun some of us boys had when there was no school, and we got to ride on the sled. The greatest thrill was when they let us hold the reins for a little.

If the road was drifted too bad, they packed down a detour across adjoinin' property. The town paid \$5.00 to the land-owner for the winter's use. It was worth it, because sometimes a field would get rutted up from bein' used too late in the spring.

Of course, this method had its drawbacks. The road was packed down so that it was passable in the winter, but when the snow began to melt in the spring, a hoss might sink two or three feet through the packed snow — and if it froze overnight, the hole was that much more dangerous. When this happened, they got a crew together to shovel the road so it would be passable.

The pay for this work was about 20¢ an hour. That might be rounded off to \$1.75 for a day's work. Workin' hours were 7:00 in the mornin' til 5:00 at night with an hour out for lunch. There was crew enough so that shovelin' through usually took only a day, but for regular work, it was a six day week. A week's work amounted to about \$10.50, so you see the \$5.00 they got for the use of their land was about a half a week's pay. A farmer with a team got double — 40¢ an hour.

Later on, they tried a "triangle" which was a plow made out of planks about two feet high that would make a path about 10 feet wide. This equipment didn't last long, probably because it was so hard to pull, and it would wee-waw from side to side accordin' to how hard the snow was packed. Another drawback was that if they met somebody, it was hard to get by, even though some of the "triangles" had wings that could be adjusted.

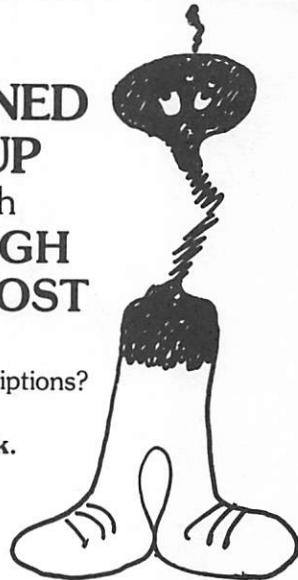
Another piece of equipment lasted quite a few years. It was the "roller," about five feet in diameter and made of planks with metal rods like spokes in a wheel. It was made in two sections, sometimes three, so that when they went around a corner, the outside wouldn't drag. It did a pretty good job, packin' down the snow. Somewhere around this time, the town bought two rollers for \$350.00. One roller was about the same as four month labor.

The town had to keep the roads open so the kids could get to school and folks could get out to get supplies once in a while. This is the way they did it, even for a house a mile out on a road by itself.

Folks were independent in them days, but they did work together and for each other to get things done that had to be done.

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BURNED
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COST

of
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Chuck.



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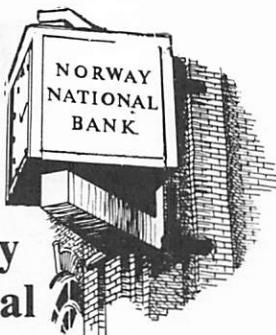
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populating her vagina, which then becomes re-populated with yeast organisms. A vaginal yeast infection results, a superimposed complicating infection.

Thirdly, the use of antibiotics may promote the development of resistance of bacteria to those antibiotics. Over the years gonorrhea organisms have become less and less sensitive to penicillin.

A fourth result of ingesting antibiotics is their potential for toxicity. Diarrhea from ampicillin is minor compared to the permanent staining of teeth in children exposed to tetracyclines, or the loss of capacity to make blood cells which can result from the use of chloramphenicol.

One last consideration when taking antibiotics is the expense involved. Vibramycin, for example, costs ninety cents a pill. A ten day course of this medicine would cost thirty-six dollars. It's a sound idea to be sure that the medicine is indicated.

Next month, we will examine how antibiotics are misused both by doctors and by patients. In so doing, it will be important to remember the precepts pertaining to the use of antibiotics already outlined, and to recall the potential consequences of their use, which include the possibilities that:

1. The infection may not be treated at all.
2. Treatment may foster a false sense of security.
3. Bacterial super-infection may result.
4. Resistant bacteria may arise.
5. Frequent and sometimes dangerous side-effects may occur.
6. A great deal of money may be needlessly spent.

Consumerism in medicine — that's what this is all about. See you next month.

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I once had a very strange boss
Who was overly fond of the sauce
He would try hard to squelch
Every hiccup and belch
While dictating mail from his hoss.

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...Page 19

"There's shells in the scrambled eggs."

"Funny. I strained them through my socks."

"Anybody want to go up to the pond this morning?"

"Yeah, I'll go with you, Bill," I answered too quickly.

"You're as crazy as Bill."

"Blackflies'll eat the label off your bug spray."

"Trees right down to the shore... no wading room... no place to cast a line."

Bill pointed the boat toward the mountain seven miles down the lake. After a long and quiet ride, we saw the twin brooks running out of the dense forest, primeval signposts for the animal trail leading to the top of the ridge and to the pond. The music of the brooks and the soft springy floor of the woods made the climb easy. I wondered if the trout in the pond above had found the ascent as pleasant. In among the trees next to the shore, we found an old Rangeley boat, an obvious veteran of many Maine winters. We slid it quietly, almost reverently, into the water.

"It's leaking pretty badly through the transom."

"It's a small pond."

Bill rowed while I bailed, the one moving toward the trout while the other tried desperately to stay above them. Several loons steered clear of this comedy with some disdain, while a moose with typical moose-like aloofness hardly gave us a glance. Up and down the half-mile pond we rowed. The loons grew more tolerant, and the moose continued with brunch as we became more and more a part of this dream. A Reuben Wood and an Adirondack, old fly patterns created seventy-five years ago, flicked out to find the native redspots, and seemed to touch the past as well. Beautiful trout, brightly colored, all handled gingerly, were touched and released — forty or fifty, perhaps. Keeping and counting were not a part of this day.

Wine and cookies made lunch; then followed a nap in the sun. More rowing, more bailing, more fishing, more redspots.

"I can't believe the fishing could be this good only three hours from Portland."

"The fish are here because the people aren't. We used to have ponds like this

around home, twenty-thirty years ago. People fish 'em out, though. They don't think about leavin' any for their grandsons."

"You mean that people keep more than their limit and clean out a pond like this?"

"Yes, the meathunters do it with worms. That's one way. But you see, brook trout are pretty stupid. They're delicate, and they don't live very long, five years maybe. They'll hit almost anything if they're native and wild. If you use big hooks, yank them around, and handle them roughly, most of them will die even if you do throw 'em back. Even with the small barbless hooks we're using, five or maybe ten per cent of the fish we caught today aren't going to make it."

"Then there's the beer cans, outhouses and gasoline motors. They all help to clean out a pond like this, too. Nobody knows about this pond, nobody. That's why the fishing here is just like it was fifty years ago."

Back at the camp the incredible quiet of the Maine woods intervened. Sunset, deep darkness, crickets, supper done.

"One diamond."

"One heart..."

"Pass."

"Four hearts!"

"God dammit, Jay. You ever played bridge before?"

"First time."

"I read where you can fish a salmon river in Iceland for a thousand dollars a week. They take you in, guides and all, and they do everything but guarantee you a salmon."

"Someday you'll be doin' that for redspots," said Bill.

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the caterpillar clumsy
climbs over brown stalks
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in rolling leaf
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that tremendous transformation
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...Page 17

Co-op stores also welcome non-members to come in and check over the stock, and see how the co-op is run. Non-members can also shop in the store, but they pay a higher mark-up than working members.

Oxford County co-ops have planned two stores to open soon. The Out-to-Lunch Co-op in Bethel will be opening a store called the Community Food and Nutrition Center, Inc. in May or June, on Main Street, just below the town office. The store will be open two or three days a week.

The Fare Share Co-op Store will open in Norway-South Paris once a permanent space has been obtained (probably in June or July). It will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Both stores will start small, with a stock of mostly staples. Once refrigeration can be set up, they will carry cheese, and then produce. Membership is open to all who agree to pay a deposit (which covers cost of the stock), and who will work the required four to five hours each month. The stores will be staffed by members, as well as a paid manager, who will oversee the operation and co-ordinate volunteers.

Both groups are involved in a series of sales, raffles and benefits to raise money for start-up costs.

Co-ops sprout naturally whenever people realize they have certain choices as shoppers. Opting to carry on some of the work of getting their own food not only saves people money, but also allows them a bit more control in choosing where they spend their food dollars.

Co-ops try to deal directly with farmers whenever it's possible. A purchase directly from the farm gives the consumer some of the control that centers on a seemingly endless supply of middlemen. (A study has shown, for instance, that a midwestern farmer's wheat is handled and owned by 22 people, before being bought back as his daily bread.) If co-ops eliminate unnecessary intermediaries, they make it easier for consumers and growers to understand each other's needs and concerns.

Gutco buys apples, potatoes, cider, maple syrup and fish from Mainers, and during harvest, many other fruits and vegetables are added to this list. Organic oranges are bought directly from Florida at prices a bit lower than commercial chemical oranges.

Fedco Warehouse buys many items, including wheat, rye, beans and honey directly from Mainers, and a growing number of other items from farmers in other parts of the country (like organic rice from a farmer in Arkansas).

As fuel prices soar, and drought hurts major crop-producing parts of the United States, it will become increasingly important for Maine to raise most of its own food. Maine's Commissioner of Agriculture, Joe Williams, now supports food self-sufficiency in Maine. The growing co-op movement will be an important link in a shifting consumer demand, away from large out-of-state producers to local growers.

As the co-ops buy more produce locally and help growers to export their crops, there may be a corresponding revitalization of Maine agriculture, with farmers becoming a thriving, rather than a dying, breed. Healthy food is surely the key to a healthy, self-reliant people.

Morse is an original member of Gutco. He works at Morse Orchards in Waterford and at the Federation of Co-ops Warehouse in Hallowell.



ROCK WALL

the old gray wall
gentle
climbs the hill
 rising, sighing
 it crests the knoll —
 then burrows
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 down the other side.
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but the wall's spine
 moves on...determined —
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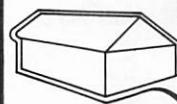
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...Page 13

room for a quick breather. Other times I would increase the intensity of the steam experience by ladling more water onto the hot rocks, sending clouds swirling around us.

Nothing else existed. We and the vapor and the heat were one.



The author, with sons Jonathan and Chris

Reluctantly, lazily, we finally scrubbed up, catching our breath as we rinsed off under the cold shower spray, a necessary part of the ritual, for it seals the pores and cools the lungs. The boys dressed quickly and headed for the comic books and exercise machines in the main room. After admiring my rosy complexion in the steamy dressing room mirror, I ambled out and over to the cluttered table that doubles as a reception desk, and chatted with Gay and Martha. Running the place is a big job for them but they don't look tired. Maybe that's because they top every worknight (the "Sponge" is open from 4 p.m. until 10 p.m.) with a sauna



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bath and then go home and sleep like Finnish farmhands.

Besides the gargantuan task of keeping the wood fires going in sixteen "kiuas" (fireboxes), there is the necessity of scrubbing every inch of every cubicle at least twice a week to keep them disinfected and free of mold.

"We don't want mushrooms growing out of the benches," says Gay.

A mixed clientele streams from Auburn and Lewiston as well as the nearby Oxford Hills villages. If the "Sponge's" atmosphere must be described, it would be as disarmingly casual family-style. They've had sauna bathers as young as three months old and on up into the 80's. In Finland, I learned, babies are literally born in saunas for it is often considered the most sanitary and relaxing room in which a woman could be delivered of a child. It is also considered a somewhat holy place. To a Finn, and to many of the rest of us, cleanliness is next to Godliness.

The bath (or "kyly") has to be experienced to be understood and appreciated. It offers the contrast we up-tight Americans need to dispel tension. Most of us work too hard and play too hard and seldom completely unwind from either.

The girls told me, "People bring their own birch switches, otherwise known as 'vihtas,' but fly swatters do just as well. Swat yourself all over every now and then; it is great for the circulation. In the winter, some of our customers do just as they do in Finland, run outside to roll in the snow. Either that or they jump in the nearest lake. Cold after hot is essential for closing the pores and lowering the body temperature."

Gay said, "I've been taking sauna baths all my life and can't conceive of life without them. They make you feel so good!"

Jonathan was finished agitating his tiny bottom on the canvas belt and Chris had ridden two miles on the stationary bicycle, so I swung my down coat on and we headed out the door into a heavy snowfall. The boys ran happily ahead of me to our little blue car, already blanketed with snow. Flakes like falling stars fell around me and the wind blew against my parka, but I felt warm and strong and Scandinavian.

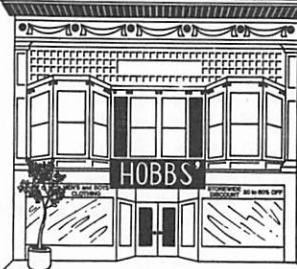
Kind of like a young Ingrid Bergman.

And, just think. There wasn't a psychopath in the whole place.

Pat White Gorrie

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Prom Dresses

Of the tribe of Rokomeko —
Though Saint Francis called by some,
From the land beyond the mountains
These few wild men had come.

Up and down the Androscoggin
Lived and roamed for many a day.
Till with many a season's hunting
These tall braves grew old and grey.

And 'twas whispered 'mongst the settlers
That the Indians hid their gold
'Neath the plume-like, feathery branches
Of a stately hemlock old.

And the white men talked about it,
Wondering at the story told,
Wishing they could find the treasure
Called the Indians' buried gold.

There was one among the settlers
Who for this world's goods did long;
He resolved to have the treasure,
Be it right or be it wrong.

So when Autumn tinged the forest
With rich colors bright and gay,
And the Indians started hunting
To the "Big Lakes" far away.

One fair night in bright October
When the hunter's moon ran high,
O'er the river like an arrow
Sped a "dug-out" swift and sly.

Disappeared among the shadows
Of the hemlocks dark and old;
It's propeller? — the white settler,
Bound to have the red men's gold.

Was it worth the price — his honor?
Ah! That will never be known.
When again the Indians camped there,
'Twas to find their treasure flown.

But one squaw among their number,
Lithe and handsome, young and bold,
Found and knew the iron hatchet
They had hidden with their gold.

Yet 'twas not upon the island
That the hatchet she did find,
But within a white man's dwelling.
Then Moll Lockett spake her mind.

Straight and slender as a sapling,
With her flashing eyes so black,
Stood the radiant Indian maiden
Pointing out the wild rough track

That the white man's feet should follow
In the years that stretched ahead.
Better for the grasping settler
And Moll Lockett struck him dead.

"Never shall the white thief prosper
The Great Spirit says the same;
And misfortune shall deal harshly
With the ones who bear his name.

Trouble shall be theirs forever,
Home and lands be swept away;
When success has almost crowned them,
Sorrow's dark shall come to stay.

Sickness dire shall fall upon them,
They shall die before they're old;
For the Indian's curse is on them,
For the white man stole our gold.

And when drought and famine reach you,
When your troubles seem the worst,
The Great Spirit will not aid you."
That was how Moll Lockett cursed.

Years and years have come and vanished
Since this happened long ago.
And the tossing, nodding hemlocks
Ages past were all laid low;

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But descendants of that settler
Whether aged, young or bold,
Never have been known to prosper
Since the Indian's curse of old.

And on bright October evenings,
Ghostly boats the river cross,
While upon old hemlock island
Ghostly branches seem to toss.

And beneath the stately hemlock
In the shadows you'll behold
Molly Lockett's ghostly figure,
Keeping watch o'er buried gold.



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standing in the dooryard waiting for Dad to put the car in the garage. Suddenly, off probably a couple hundred yards on the side of Webrow Mountain, the most blood-curdling scream split the air. First it sounded like crazy laughing, screaming shrieks, and then ended in growls and howls. I remember burying my head in Mama's skirt. I could feel her trembling. My brother started crying. Dad ran for his shotgun.

Meanwhile, the animal was going farther away as its hideous shrieks grew fainter. I remember I couldn't sleep for a long time that night, and Mama sat on the foot of the bed, looking out the window.

A few days later Mama borrowed a trap from Grandpa and said she was going to set a trap for the bob-cat. There was an old two-horse scoot sled propped up against a young pine on the back side of the pasture, next to the foot of the mountain. Mama chained the trap to the scoot. Then, with a claw bar to help, she finally got the #3 trap set. She had a hen that had thrown out her insides, and she killed it there, dripping blood all over the trap and hanging the hen just over it.

The next day, Mama took her rifle and we went with her to tend the trap. The scoot had been turned over, the trap sprung and the ground was all dug up for a big area around it. All we had was a handful of yellowish-gray hairs left in the trap. She showed these to Grandpa and he said they definitely came from a cat. I remember how scared we were walking home. We kept looking behind us; we could feel the hair crawl on our necks. Whatever she had caught had to be pretty powerful to tip that heavy scoot over.

About twenty years ago there were a lot of rumors of people seeing a black panther around the None Such River, in Scarborough. I never heard if they finally caught it. Probably someone remembers it or saw it.

I don't think mountain lions are new to Maine. I think they have probably been driven back from over-populated places, but I'll bet there have always been some back in the remote areas of the state.

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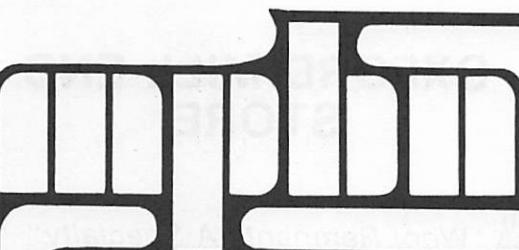
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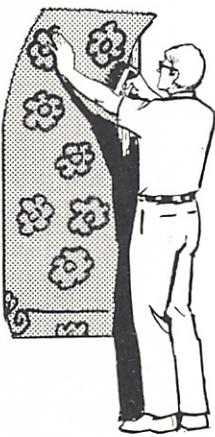
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